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**File Code:** 2410  
**Date:** March 29, 2021

Dear Interested Party:

The Grand Valley Ranger District of the Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, and Gunnison National Forests (GMUG) is requesting comments on the Rim Resiliency Project to address forest health and hazardous fuel concerns in the West Bench/Anderson Reservoir area in Mesa County, Colorado. This project was developed to continue a multi-phased silvicultural plan to enhance forest health on ~2800 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands located within wildland urban interface (WUI). The project is located approximately 5 miles west of the Grand Mesa Visitors Center and approximately 49 miles east of Grand Junction, CO (T11S, R96W Sections 31-34 and 36; T12N-R97W Section 1 and 12; T12N R96W Sections 1-20 and 23-24; T12N-R95W Section 18 and 19).

The purpose of the Rim Project is to improve the resiliency of spruce dominated stands at risk of large-scale epidemics, continue with established long-term silvicultural goals and reduce the safety threats of falling, dead trees and large-scale wildfires. The project area falls within WUI and has experienced active timber management in the past.

The goal of this project is to continue to move timbered stands and the overall landscape toward a mosaic of diverse ages, sizes, densities, and species; create more-open, multi-aged structure having reduced density large-diameter trees while maintaining adequate standing and down dead trees; and establish a healthier aspen component than currently exists. Retaining some of the overstory and mid-sized tree classes to promote structural diversity and to serve as a shelterwood for developing regeneration is also desired.

The GMUG is proposing to increase forest resiliency to insects and disease, decrease hazard trees in high use areas, decrease fires hazards within WUI, and conduct resiliency/sanitation/salvage activities in the form of commercial harvest and mechanical treatments. Treatments proposed are part of a Three-phased process where most timbered stands have already had an initial harvest 30-40 years ago that resulted in approximately 30% of the stands being removed. Ground surveys conducted in the summer of 2018 indicate that the first phase harvests within the project area have largely achieved their goals creating wind firmness. Now, these proposed second phase treatments would be addressed through two silvicultural prescriptions:

- Group Selection is proposed on ~72 acres. Under this prescription mature and high-risk trees would be harvested from approximately 20-30% of the treated stands with small openings (groups) ranging from  $\frac{1}{4}$  - 2 acres in size.
- Shelterwood is proposed on ~2703 acres. This prescription would include reserving scattered individual trees displaying the most vigorous, healthy, windfirm characteristics and with high cone production for seed dispersal. Harvesting would focus on trees



displaying insect/disease activity, defects, low-vigor, merchantable dead and high-risk trees reserving ~90-110 basal area per acre.

Since many of the stands have previous harvest activities, there are old roadbeds that would be used to access the timber. An estimated 2.5 miles of new temporary road would be needed.

Additional information is included as an attachment and map to this letter.

It is anticipated 16 USC 6591a Section 602 (Section 8204 of the 2014 Farm Bill) categorical exclusion (CE) will apply to this project area is within the Governor's designation area and meets required NFS criteria for designation and use of this category.

### Getting Involved

I am requesting that you participate in the **Rim Resiliency Project** by providing written comments to us by **April 26, 2021**. We would like to know your concerns specifically for the proposed action in this area. Your comments or concerns are valuable in helping me identify issues I need to address and consider. Please be aware that the comments received, including names and addresses of those who comment, will be part of the public record for this proposed action. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered; however, anonymous comments will not provide the Agency with the ability to provide the respondent with subsequent environmental documents.

I have opted to use a process that includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests and is transparent and non-exclusive, as per the Healthy Forest Restoration Act, Section 603(b)(1)(C)(i) and (ii)(I). I am not asking for a group for a consensus, rather that collaborators share ideas and priorities with me. In the case of this project, this would include validating the proposed actions and resource protection measures and discussing how stakeholders can help with implementation and/or monitoring. Feel free to forward to others who may be interested.

Please submit your written comments to:

Cari Johnson, Forester  
Paonia Ranger District  
PO Box 1030  
Paonia CO 81428  
Email: [cari.johnson@usda.gov](mailto:cari.johnson@usda.gov)

Comments should include:

- Your name, contact information, and organization represented, if any;
- Title of project on which the comments are being submitted in the subject line; and
- Specific facts and supporting information that you believe should be considered by me

If you would like additional information, or have questions regarding this project, please contact Cari Johnson at 970-527-4131 or email [cari.johnson@usda.gov](mailto:cari.johnson@usda.gov). Information regarding this proposal will also be posted at: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/project/?project=59704>.

Dear Interested Party:

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I appreciate your interest in the management of our public lands and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



WILLIAM A. EDWARDS  
District Ranger

Additional Information

Map

cc: [cari.johnson@usda.gov](mailto:cari.johnson@usda.gov)

